

MILPERSMAN 1730-010

USE OF LAY LEADERS AND VOLUNTEER CIVILIAN WORSHIP LEADERS IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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References	(a) SECNAVINST 1730.7D (b) OPNAVINST 1730.1E (c) SECNAVINST 7010.6A
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1. Policy

a. Per reference (a), commanders will provide a command religious program (CRP) in support of religious requirements and preferences of authorized personnel. Pursuant to reference (b), commanders may appoint lay leaders and volunteer civilian worship leaders (hereafter "volunteers") to accommodate religious diversity inherent in the members of the command. Appointments will be in writing for a specified period of time, normally 1 year, and are renewable at the commanding officer's (CO) discretion. Only authorized personnel representing their own religious organization (RO) may be appointed.

b. Lay-led religious services are integral to the CRP and subject to command supervision. In most cases, lay-led services constitute a temporary accommodation of specific religious requirements in operational, isolated, or unique settings, including but not limited to deployments, recruit training commands, isolated training environments, military sealift ships, and isolated duty stations when assigned chaplains are not able to provide or otherwise facilitate.

2. Qualifications and Training

a. COs will appoint authorized personnel as lay leaders and volunteers on the basis of volunteerism, high moral character, motivation, religious interest, and letter of certification by the appointee's RO. COs will require lay leaders and volunteers to be trained and supervised by a military chaplain.

b. Religious program specialists will not be assigned as lay leaders.

3. Terms of Appointment

a. Appointment of a lay leader or volunteer responds to an identified requirement and conveys no ecclesiastical status or civilian credentials to the authorized member or volunteer appointed.

b. The appointment ends when the particular requirement precipitating the appointment has ceased (e.g., at the end of deployment or underway period), when the requirement can be met by a chaplain or contract civilian religious ministry professional (CRMP), when the lay leader or volunteer is transferred, or at the CO's discretion. The CO may terminate the appointment when the conduct of the individual hinders the CRP or in the interest of good order and discipline.

4. Responsibilities

a. In supporting the religious requirements for which they were appointed, lay leaders and volunteers should first seek the services of a military chaplain or contract CRMP. If this is not possible or practical, they should seek to arrange transportation to an appropriate religious service in the vicinity of the command. Lacking these opportunities, lay leaders or volunteers may provide a religious service for members of their RO consistent with their lay status and as authorized by their RO.

b. Volunteers function strictly within the parameters outlined in the "Performance Statement of Work for Volunteer Civilian Worship Leaders" provided by the command, and will provide faith specific services under the supervision of a military chaplain and within the CRP.

5. **Religious Services**

a. Under reference (a), divine services are conducted by chaplains, and religious services are conducted by contract CRMPs, lay leaders, or authorized volunteers in the manner and form of the represented ROs.

b. Military chaplains and contract CRMPs are ordinarily the only persons to provide rites, sacraments, and ordinances within the Department of the Navy.

c. COs may permit lay leaders and volunteers to provide specified religious rites, sacraments, or ordinances to their co-religionists if their RO permits them to do so. A statement of certification or approval by the RO to conduct the religious rite, sacrament, or ordinance must be provided by the lay leader or volunteer. This permission will be granted after consultation with a military chaplain.

d. Military chaplains, contract CRMPs, and lay leaders take precedence over volunteers in leading public worship.

6. **Offerings**

a. Religious offerings will not be taken at lay-led services, except as authorized by the CO.

b. Any monies collected will be part of the command religious offering fund and must be collected, accounted for, and disbursed per reference (c).